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NEWS RELEASE

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As the fall time change approaches this weekend with daylight savings time ending, the City of Branson Fire Department would like to remind residents to make another change that could save their lives by simply changing the batteries in their smoke alarms. The official time change occurs at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 1.

It is estimated that over 92% of American homes now have at least one smoke alarm. “Supporting that high rate and striving for 100%, firefighters now focus their efforts on smoke alarm maintenance. “We encourage everyone to participate in the ‘Change Your Clock – Change Your Battery’ campaign by testing their smoke alarms monthly and installing new batteries,” stated Division Chief Randy Fogle.

“Smoke alarms are inexpensive, usually less than \$10 for a battery operated unit. For very little money, you provide an excellent tool to warn you of smoke or a fire in the home and give occupants those critical extra seconds to escape,” stated Fire Chief Ted Martin. “It’s typically not the fire that kills, but the toxic and super-heated smoke, especially when folks are sleeping,” added Chief Martin. According to the International Association of Fire Chiefs, 85% of all fatal fires occur in residential dwellings and 29% of fatal fires have inoperable smoke alarms or none present at all. Smoke alarms should be placed in each sleeping room, on each level of the home and in common areas such as hallways and stairwells.

So make that “Change” that could save a life as you set your clocks back one hour on Saturday night (early Sunday morning, November 1), and change your smoke alarm batteries. “It’s also a good time to push the test button to make sure the alarm functions,” stated Martin. Finally, firefighters encourage you to develop a home fire escape plan showing two ways out of each room. Once developed, practice that plan with the entire family to the sound of the smoke alarm each month and gather at the designated meeting place outside the home.

Firefighters also encourage community members to dust or vacuum smoke alarms when you change the batteries and if they are more than 10 years old to simply replace them. Smoke alarms may be installed free for Branson residents if they cannot afford one. Senior citizens in Taney County may have smoke alarms installed at no cost thanks to a grant from the Taney County Senior Services Funding. By calling the Senior Centers in Branson and Forsyth or any fire department in the county, senior residents can schedule to have a firefighter help install the smoke alarms. For more information about this program or other fire prevention topics, contact the City of Branson Fire Department’s Technical Services Division at (417) 243-2780.

